



# PSYCHO-SOCIAL CHALLENGES FACED BY SENIOR CITIZENS – CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

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## ABSTRACT

The geriatric population of India keeps increasing because of medical advancements in ageing. The senior citizens face lot of psycho-social challenges which includes rejection by their own children, various forms of abuses, loneliness, being uncared of their illnesses and left unloved. The list goes on. The researcher selected a specific Old age home in Madurai, to study the psycho-social challenges faced by the Senior Citizens inspite of providing them food, clothing and shelter along with medical needs they require. The researcher adopted Explanatory Case Study design put forth by Robert K Yin (2003) and did the case study among two cases. The case study analysis was done by the researcher and the case study is presented using Brian Budgell (2008) methodology for the case study presentation. Interview was the technique used by the researcher to collect data. It was found that the cases were having interpersonal relationship problem, adjustmental problem, health issues like hyper tension and diabetes, Social isolation, forgetfulness and decrease in hearing ability. The researcher suggests through the case study analysis, to help senior citizens feel better by providing proper caregivers, enhancing family support and by adopting certain social work interventions to reduce their stress.

**KEYWORDS:** Senior Citizens, Psycho – Social Challenges, Social Work Intervention and Case Study.

## INTRODUCTION

The senior citizens today face various psycho-social challenges due to elder abuse, ill treatment, separation, memory problems, rigidity, adjustment, irritability, jealousy, withdrawal, depression, harassment, abuse, separation from loved ones, living alone without help, lack of family ties and social network have a bad impact on their well-being and the quality of life. Therefore, this study analyzed and gain an understanding of the Psycho-social problems of the senior citizens in their life. The need for this study is to identify the psycho-social challenges among elders, to be aware about their problems and their impacts. The social worker plays a major role in identifying the challenges among elders and planning for suitable interventions.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Prakash Boralingaiah et.al., (2012)** analyzed the prevalence of Psycho-Social Problems among elderly in Urban Population in Mysore city. The method was used in community-based cross-sectional study was carried out at the field practice area of Urban Health Center, JSS Medical College, Mysore. The study population comprises of all geriatric population aged 60 years or above who were residing in the study area for at least one year. 526 study subjects were recruited for the study. The major findings are 162 out of 207 elderly men (78.3%) were more functional than 240 out of 319 aged women (75.2%). Severe functional impairment was almost the same in both genders (4%). All psychological distress was found more among elderly women. The prevalence of mental illnesses was found to be significantly higher for people aged more than 75 years.

**Rakesh Singh et.al., (2013)** conducted to compare the

psycho-social problems and to determine its relationship with the selected demographic variables of the elderly living in institutional and home settings in Kathmandu, Nepal. The correlational comparative study was carried out in 2013 among 132 elderly aged 60 years and/above residing in old age homes and home settings in Kathmandu by using pre-tested structured interview schedule. The results are the psychosocial problems were greater in institutionalized elderly and there was significant difference between psychosocial problems of the elderly living in institutional and home settings. The institutionalized elderly were facing more psychosocial problems. The study shows the need for encouragement towards joint family norms. Older adults should be trained for active ageing.

**P Sukla et.al., (2013)** explored the different health and psycho-social problems of the elderly people in rural South Andhra Pradesh. A cross-sectional study was carried out to assess the health and psycho-social problems among the elderly persons. The findings among the total 122 participants, 69 males and 53 females participated in the study. The most common health problems encountered among the elderly include problems of eyesight, hearing, joint pains, nervous disorders, weakness, complaints related to heart, asthma, urinary problems and others. More health problems were reported by women compared to men. Hence, these findings raise several issues for formulating appropriate health policies for the elderly.

**RO Adeleke et.al., (2017)** aimed to define the profile of elderly patients presented with psychosocial problems in Ibadan. The study was conducted at the Chief Tony Anenih Geriatric Centre, University College Hospital (UCH), Ibadan. 160 elderly

patients were seen at the centre. The results are more than half of the elderly patients presented with psychosocial problems are between ages 66-70 years are 44.5%(Male) and 41.8%(female). The study concludes that the poor social economic status among the respondents had a negative impact on their health status as well as their health seeking behavior. The importance of emotional support, economic and information support can be deduced from the fact that spending money or giving information as to health and source of better income does not solve the problem of the elderly because these aged entities also need love, care, affection and a feeling of belongingness.

**Shabna Shajahan (2020)** assessed the psycho social problems among elderly population with special reference to selected old age home Thiruvananthapuram district. The study framed on the descriptive research design. The researcher used simple random sampling techniques of lottery method is used for selecting old age homes. A total of 50 institutional elderly populations at old age homes were taken for the study. The major findings is that elderly people in the selected old age homes are suffered from geriatric problems such as visual impairment, physical problems, respiratory problems and life style disease. Misbehavior of children, financial crisis often lead to feeling of ignorance and lack of emotional support in elderly which often compel them to lead their life in old age homes. The study concludes that it is very urge to provide physical, emotional and psychological support to the elderly population.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Aim:

To find out the Psycho-Social challenges faced by the senior citizens.

### Objectives:

- To study the socio-demographic profile of the respondents.
- To find out Psycho-social challenges faced by Senior Citizens.
- To offer suitable suggestions to cope up with psychosocial Challenges.

### Research design:

Research Design is the blueprint of the study. It is the fact-finding approach. In this research, the researcher had adopted an “**Explanatory Case Study**” research design put forth by Robert K Yin (2003). This design helped the researcher to identify and understand the challenges in detail.

### Universe:

The Senior citizen sat a particular old age home was the universe of study. There were 26 inmates in total.

### Pilot Study:

The possibility & feasibility of conducting the study at a particular old age home, Madurai was found out by the researcher.

### Sampling and its Size:

The sampling size was 2 and it was conducted at a particular

old age home using a Convenience Sampling technique in this study

### Data Collection:

The primary data for the study was collected from the selected elders using the Checklist. Secondary data was got from E-sources, previous research books and articles.

### Tools of Data Collection:

Case Study script prepared by the researcher and finalised by experts in the field.

### Method of Data Collection:

The researcher collected the data by using interview technique.

### Case Study Analysis and Interpretation:

The collected data using the case study method of **Brian Budgell (2008)** were presented in four categories,

- Introduction – Describes the context of the case
- Case presentation - Describes the history and results of any examination performed. The working diagnosis and management of the case are described.
- Outcome / Management - the reason behind the occurrences of the phenomenon.
- Discussion - summarization of the presented case study.

### Case study :1

#### Introduction:

The researcher conducted a case study on the elder's psychosocial problems using a Case Study Script. The researcher started with his personal details such as life, family and causes for admission in particular old age home. Mr. A was 78 years old, from a Village in Sivaganga District, was a Farmer, having education up to 7th standard, was a widower since 2012. His daughter was a divorcee and his son died in 2020 because of taking too much alcohol. Mr. A was a hard worker and he does a work perfectly always. He had a low interpersonal relationship and he denied speaking with others. He had diabetic and took pills to reduce the level of diabetics. He had proper sleep and took food regularly.

#### Case Presentation:

The case study was done by asking questions in the case study script prepared by the researcher. Mr. A had an economic problem; in the sense his daughter- in-law forced him to give the land her name. He didn't give the land to her, because she had extra-marital affairs. His interpersonal relationship was poor, so he isolated himself, avoided speaking with others and got engaged in taking care of kitchen garden. He had an injury in the leg in 2018, before joining the old age home. He had diabetic and was properly treated at the old age home. He was dependent upon others for day-to-day activities. He had low level of dementia. He was fearful. He was found to be unfriendly with others and was in isolation. He needed some intervention that enhances interpersonal relationship, improvement in communication and accepting himself and his life situation.

**Outcome:**

From the above case analysis, proved clear that the respondent's, getting older experiencing more interpersonal relationship issues, lack of adapting the environment, mild level of dementia and experiences the social isolation. Coping strategies to manage the problems in the sense of meditation, interact more with other with the trustworthy person, trained to adapt the situation and create adjustmental behaviour with other. He joined that old age home due to his family problem and rejection at home by both daughter and daughter-in-law.

**Discussion:**

Mr. A, 78 years old, widower, from a village had so many psycho – social challenges in living with his family. His widowed daughter could not take care of him. His daughter-in-law, who had extra marital relationship, had left Mr. A without any wealth by getting everything from him. Also, both of them were unwilling to have him with them and so he joined the old age home. He was developing dementia, had interpersonal problems, loneliness and adjustmental problem. He needed improved interpersonal relationship with inmates at old age home, and to feel good being at old age home where he is cared and provided with basic needs.

**Case Study: 2****Introduction:**

Mrs. B was 66 years old, studied up to 6<sup>th</sup> standard, unmarried mother. She had a son of 41 years. She worked as a maid since her childhood and when she was 15 years old, she was abused by the owner and got pregnant. After, she was admitted in a destitute home and fully taken care of by the home. She gave birth to a baby boy and the child was adopted by the family who lived in Sweden, arranged by the destitute home with her permission. Her son became a doctor in Sweden. He visits her biological mother once in ten years and spends time with her. Considering her age above 60, she was transferred from a destitute home to an old age home. She had number of psycho-social challenges to cope up with.

**Case Presentation:**

Mrs. B answered based on the researcher Case Study Script. Both fact probing and feelings probing were done by the researcher in understanding her psycho- social challenges. She had poor interpersonal relationship with others. But she helps others a lot in the needed time, but after that no one can talk with her and denied their words mostly. So, she isolated herself even at the time of eating the food, where everyone sits and eats the food in dining hall, but she took her food to her bed. She felt lonely. She had various health issues such as diabetes, blood pressure, mild level of hearing impairment too. She consulted with the doctor monthly once and took tablets prescribed by the doctor continuously. Some somatic symptoms were identified such as body pain, weakness of breathe, body shivering and body functioning was poor. She took more tablets for her health issue. She always was found to be drowsy due to intake of more tablets. She was not able to complete her own task independently, because of her memory loss problem that was dementia. So, she was writing the task for remembering the things continuously by reading it. She was found to be less

adaptive to the environment and others. The childhood trauma had left her with unhealed psychological wounds and scars.

**Outcome:**

From the analysis, Mrs. B had various psychosocial challenges such as loneliness, poor interpersonal relationship, Somatic Symptoms, Dementia, Dependency and various other health issues. Coping strategies for managing health issues were walking, doing exercises and maintaining body weight for normal level of diabetes were adopted. Eating healthy and fat free foods, doing work like washing her clothes were the exercises and good for physical health. She was taken through swish therapy to forget childhood trauma and to accept herself.

**Discussion:**

Mrs. B, 60 years old, unmarried mother, got accommodated at a destitute home, found her biological son after many decades as a doctor at Sweden. She was abused during her childhood while working as servant maiden. Her childhood trauma had damaged her personality to the core. Since she was accommodated in a destitute home, she was remaining like a saint, praying and being devoted to God inspite of having various psycho-social challenges like poor interpersonal relationship, feeling lonely, having physical issues. She was given intervention to cope up with the present situation, forget the past and to accept herself as she is. Through some series of social work interventions starting from giving her son in adoption, accepted destitute home, rehabilitation and other therapies had really helped her to overcome all the challenges in her life.

**Findings and Suggestions:**

The major findings were that Psycho-social challenges were the poor Interpersonal Relationship. It led to difficulty in adjusting to the changes in their life. Sometimes lack of communication created a situation where they were isolated and spent time in loneliness. The inmates had psycho-social challenges and were unaware of those challenges. The inmates felt empty and meaningless in their life because of a lack of family support.

The researcher suggests to identify the psycho- social challenges faced by each inmate by the caregiver at old age home and to plan for intervention for each inmate. The caregiver can device preventive measures for managing psychosocial challenges in a better way and can provide referral services for psycho-social intervention to a Social worker or psychologist. To coordinate with the other experts, doctors and social workers in order to conduct various awareness programs. To form support groups and build rapport among them. The caregiver identifies risk factors and helps to overcome them to promote the good health of the elderly.

**CONCLUSION**

After the case study analysis of Psycho-social challenges faced by the elders, the researcher concludes to provide quality service in terms of treatment and prevention of Psycho-social problems among the senior citizens. Psychosocial problems have a significant impact on mental health of the elderly and give rise to various mental disorders. The support of the family members and caregivers is important as it strengthens

their treatment and there is a need for social work intervention also. A social worker plays an important role in dealing with psychosocial challenges among the elderly in bringing effective strategies that help them to cope better. The social worker will give intervention to the inmate's Psycho-social situation including their emotional problem, level of self-esteem and their level of stress and cognitive ability by planning strategies for each individual inmates for betterment.

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